

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /057 W

----- 102597

R 031052Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2948

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINT TH

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THANOM'S POSSIBLE RETURN

SUMMARY: THANOM HAS REPORTEDLY AGREED TO COMPLY WITH UNOFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REQUEST NOT TO RETURN TO THAILAND FOR THE TIME BEING. POLICE INVESTIGATING SEVEN COMPLAINTS AGAINST FORMER PRIMIN THANOM KITTIKHACHON WHICH ACCUSE HIM OF ORDERING THE SHOTTING OF DEMONSTRATORS IN OCT 1973, UPRISING. IF COMPLAINTS FOUND TO BE SUBSTANTIVE, THANOM COULD BE ARRESTED UPON ARRIVAL. ABBOT OF WAT BOWONNIWET WILLING TO ORDAIN THANOM AS BUDDHIST MONK. NON-DEMOCRAT MP'S, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT COALITION MP'S, LEAVING SOLUTION OF PROBLEM OF THANOM'S RETURN TO DEMOCRATS. MILITARY HAS KEPT ITS DISTANCE IN THIS AFFAIR. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO THE SEPT 3 BANGKOK WORLD, PRIMIN M R SENI PRAMOT HAS TOLD PRESS THAT FORMER PRIMIN THANOM KITTIKHACHON AGREED TO COMPLY WITH AN UNOFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REQUEST NOT TO RETURN TO THE COUNTRY FOR THE TIME BEING.

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THE REQUEST WAS CONVEYED TO THANOM BY JUSTICE MINISTER PRASIT

KANCHANAWAT, WHO FLEW TO SINGAPORE ON HIS OWN. THE PRIMIN ALSO DENIED PRESS REPORTS THAT THANOM HAD SUBMITTED A PETITION TO THE KING REQUESTING PERMISSION TO RETURN TO THAILAND.

2. POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SISUK MAHINTHORATHEP TOLD THE PRESS ON SEPT 2 THAT THE POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING SEVEN SEPARATE COMPLAINTS ACCUSING FORMER PRIMIN THANOM KITTIKHACHON OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ORDERING THE SHOOTING OF DEMONSTRATORS DURING THE OCT 14, 1973, UPRISING. HE SAID THAT THANOM WOULD BE ARRESTED UPON HIS RETURN IF RPT IF THESE INVESTIGATIONS FIND THAT THE ALLEGATIONS HAVE SUBSTANCE. HE WAS HOWEVER, UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE INVESTIGATIONS WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE UNDETERMINED RETURN OF THANOM.

3. PHRA THEPKRAWI, SPEAKING FOR SOMDET PHRA YANASANGWON, CHIEF ABBOT OF WAT BOWONNIWET IN BANGKOK TOLD THE PRESS ON SEPT 2 THAT THE ABBOT HAS NO OBJECTIONS TO ORDAINING THANOM AS A BUDDHIST MONK. HE SAID THAT RELATIVES OF THANOM HAD CONTACTED THE ABBOT ON THIS MATTER. PHRA THEPKRAWI SAID THAT THE FACT THAT THANOM MAY FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON HIS ENTRY INTO MONKHOOD. HOWEVER, IF THE COURTS FOUND THANOM GUILTY OF A CRIME, HE WOULD BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE MONKHOOD.

4. THE MILITARY HAS KEPT ITS DISTANCE FROM THIS AFFAIR, THE SEPT 3 NATION REPORTED THAT PRIMIN M R SENI PRAMOT SAID HE HAD BEEN ASSURED BY THE MILITARY THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN THANOM'S RETURN AS THEY HAD IN THAT OF PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIAN. THE POLICE WOULD HANDLE ANY CASE THAT ARISES.

5. THE ATTITUDE OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TOWARD THANOM'S RETURN VARIES GREATLY. MOST DEMOCAAT MP'S ARE AGAINST HIS RETURN. MOST NON-DEMOCRAT MP'S, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION, BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL OR LEGAL RIGHT TO FORBID THANOM'S ENTRY INTO THAILAND. IN THEIR VIEW THE PROBLEM OF WHAT TO DO WITH HIM IF HE DOES RETURN IS ONE FOR THE DEMOCRATS TO DEAL WITH. THIS LATTER ATTITUDE IS REFLECTED IN HALF-JOKING SUGGESTION DEPUTY PRIMIN PRAMAN ADIREKSAN REPORTEDLY MADE DURING AUTUST 31 CABINET MEETING. HE SAID THAT A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE SHOULD BE APPOINTED TO CONSIDER THANOM'S REQUEST TO RETURN, WITH THE PRIMIN AS CHAIRMAN AND THE DEFENSE AND INTERIOR MINISTERS AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. M R SENI HOLDS ALL THREE POSITIONS. BURKE

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